



Distribution: **Tuesday 31 March 2020**

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update

Please find below the third edition of our Coronavirus (COVID-19) update.

A lot has happened since the start of this week. We've taken a tough decision to furlough some of our employees, which will result in clubs having a different point of contact for a while, we've also decided to close our Rugby 365 facilities until the end of June and have cancelled training courses for the foreseeable future. In addition, we've made good progress in the understanding the impact of the support packages available, including government and Sport England support. More detailed information is available below.

We will continue to provide regular updates to support our clubs through this communication.



RFU headlines

The following decisions have been announced this week:

RFU employees

Like many other businesses, including some in sport, the RFU is taking prudent steps to protect its finances and employees at this unprecedented time. We will take advantage of the government's **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**. Furloughing of some employees is one of the ways in which we are trying to protect jobs for the future. This will include a lot of our locally deployed staff. Area Managers/central teams will be in contact individually with CBs and partners over the next few days, once we have spoken with all impacted individuals to update on the local situation and mitigation to ensure clubs remain supported.

Supplemental Pot Payments

Clubs, CBs and/or Referee Societies eligible for the Supplemental Pot Payment will be receiving an individual communication tomorrow providing details of the payment that will be made to their bank accounts on Friday 3 April 2020.

Payment of Players Declarations/Club Grants/Loans

Those clubs currently ineligible for RFU Benefits under Regulation 7 (Payment of Player Regulations - [click here](#) to read) will not be eligible for the RFU/CB Immediate Support Fund or RFU loans in the 2019-20 season. In relation to the Immediate Support Fund, CBs are not permitted to utilise

their Q1 to Q3 underspend, Q4 advance payment or their share of the additional £400,000 to support these clubs, neither can they allocate any of their match-funded reserves (against their share of the £400,000) to these clubs. Should they wish to, CBs are, however, permitted to allocate any additional sums from their own reserves to these clubs.

CBs will receive a full list of ineligible clubs in the next few days.

If clubs wish to be eligible for RFU Benefits in the 2020-21 season, they must submit a Declaration in accordance with RFU Regulation 7. Further information on subsequent eligibility for loans will follow later this week.

Temporary closure of Rugby 365 AGPs

In order to protect our staff and volunteers who work at Host Clubs on a day-to-day basis, the Rugby 365 facilities will close from 1 April until 30 June 2020, subject to continual review. No maintenance or usage will take place during this period. We have asked Host Clubs to secure the sites and, where possible, the pitches will be monitored remotely. Subject to government guidance, we will work with our partners to bring the facilities back to full operation at the appropriate time. Please contact Rugby365@rfu.com if you have any enquiries.

RFU Training Courses

All RFU training courses scheduled to take place between 1 April – 30 June 2020 have been cancelled. Anyone who has booked onto a course will receive notification and full refund. No further training courses will be scheduled until the government's restrictions are lifted. Members of the England Rugby Coach and Referee Associations will be offered access to a weekly webinars, e-learning and digital content in the interim.

Other support available

Government support packages

We understand that Local Authorities are now beginning to write to, or will be shortly writing to, all businesses (clubs) who are rate payers and who will be eligible to receive some of the support grants and rate relief that the Chancellor announced. The communications may be addressed to the **business (club) address, i.e. actual rugby clubs**. This will depend on the information that the Local Authority holds. You may need to enter your clubhouse to collect the information especially as we have been made aware that some Local Authorities have requested further information, but clearly working within government guidelines.

Sport England launches the Community Emergency Fund

Sport England has today announced a £195 million package to help sport and physical activity through Coronavirus. This includes a new £20 million Community Emergency Fund which is open now for local club and community organisations to bid for grants between £300 and £10,000. We will now analyse what this could mean for rugby clubs over the next couple of days and will provide an update in Friday's Community Game Update. In the meantime, we would encourage clubs to take a look at this new initiative.

You can read the article [here](#).

Clubs doing great things

We are pleased to that so many clubs continue to support their local communities. [Click here](#) to read more.

Please email VeeMontebello@rfu.com or PatriciaMowbray@rfu.com to let us know about your club's activities.

Other important updates

Referees and match officials working together to support clubs

The Rugby Football Referee Union has called on its members to work together, as well as with individual CBs, to do whatever is possible to support clubs who are financially challenged by their inability to operate during these unprecedented times. Current ideas include consideration as to how to best utilise training and development monies that are unlikely to be spent, the refund of charges levied against clubs for the provision of Match Officials, the return of prospective charges, and rebated seasonal payments. Feedback which can be shared with the match officiating community is welcomed. Members are also asked to share and publicise any successful efforts that have resulted in monies being re-routed back in to the game in order to support clubs.

Updated guidance for team strength & conditioning and medical staff

Click here to read the current guidance that has been issued for strength & conditioning and medical staff working in English rugby who are providing conditioning and rehabilitation services for players during the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This is based on current government advice, as of Wednesday 25 March 2020. Additional guidance has been provided regarding the medical services provision and the ongoing care of injured players.

